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# LETTER DATED 5 MARCH 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

In accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 678 (1990), I wish, on behalf of my Government, to submit the following report on actions undertaken pursuant to paragraphs 2 and 3 of that resolution up to the time of the suspension of offensive military operations against Iraq by coalition military forces at midnight (eastern standard time) on 27 February.

On the night of 23 February (eastern standard time), the military forces of the coalition, including United States' military forces, acting in accordance with Security Council resolution 678 (1990), launched ground operations to obtain full Iraqi compliance with all 12 relevant Security Council resolutions, and particularly to ensure the full withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

This move by the combined surface, naval and air units of the coalition forces came about following intensive diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving peaceful Iraqi withdrawal and after provocative actions by the Government of Iraq, including the continued indiscriminate launching of surface-to-surface missiles at civilian targets, commencement of a "scorched earth" policy, including large-scale destruction of oil facilities and public and private buildings in Kuwait, and evidence of increased atrocities against the Kuwaiti civilian population.

At least 600 oil installations were set on fire prior to 23 February. Coalition forces have physical evidence that these fires were deliberately set by Iraqi forces and have in their possession captured Iraqi documents giving orders to destroy oil installations. In the last few days of their occupation of Kuwait, Iraqi forces deliberately set about destroying major public buildings and hotels and some private residences.

Members of the Kuwaiti resistance report that in addition to cases of torture, rape and murder committed by the Iraqi forces during the period of control of Kuwait (currently being documented by the international media), large numbers of Kuwaiti civilians were rounded up and detained during the last days of Iraqi occupation. It is believed that these detainees were transferred to Iraq.

In response to these actions and in accordance with Security Council resolution 678 (1990), United States and other coalition ground forces attacked on several fronts on the night of 23 February. The operation included an outflanking movement to prevent the Iraqi forces in southern Iraq from moving into Kuwait. At no time did the coalition forces have any intention of destroying Iraq or of attacking Baghdad.

In a briefing on the last day of the military action, General Norman Schwarzkopf gave a description of the planning and execution of the ground campaign. He explained that a key purpose of the extensive coalition air campaign in the weeks leading up to 23 February was to isolate the Kuwaiti theatre of operations by destroying all the bridges and supply lines that ran between the northern and southern parts of Iraq. He said this action was taken to prevent the reinforcement and supply of forces in southern Iraq and Kuwait. Heavy bombing was necessary, he explained, to weaken Iraqi forces, particularly along the front line barrier that coalition forces would have to go through. He explained that once Iraqi air reconnaissance was deterred by coalition control of the air, in a massive move to the west, coalition personnel, equipment and supplies were positioned to outflank the Iraqi forces.

Coalition forces rapidly achieved their objectives of defeating the Iraqi forces that had carried out the invasion and occupation of Kuwait, and of permitting the return of the territory of Kuwait to its legitimate Government. This success constitutes a significant milestone towards the goal of restoring international peace and security to the area as set forth in Security Council resolution 678 (1990).

In the course of the engagement, coalition forces captured more than 50,000 Iraqi soldiers. These prisoners of war (POWs) have been treated in accordance with the Third Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, which has included the provision of medical care, shelter, food and water.

The Iraqi Government continues to hold United States POWs, other coalition POWs, an undetermined number of Kuwaiti civilians and military personnel, and other civilians of different nationalities. The Iraqi authorities have refused representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) access to coalition POWs and have refused to enter into discussions with ICRC on those listed as missing in action.

The Iraqi forces continued to fire surface-to-surface missiles until the last days of the military engagement. The total number of such missiles fired since 16 January was 81 - 41 against Saudi Arabia, 38 against Israel, one against Bahrain and one against Qatar.

Coalition air attacks against military and strategic targets in Iraq and Kuwait continued until the suspension of military operations. Coalition forces took every precaution to minimize collateral damage to civilian facilities. The Iraqi Government, however, intentionally placed civilians at risk through its behaviour. Following are a few concrete examples of such behaviour:

(a) The Iraqi Government moved significant amounts of military weapons and equipment into civilian areas with the deliberate purpose of using innocent civilians and their homes as shields against attacks on legitimate military targets;

(b) Iraqi fighter and bomber aircraft were dispersed into villages near military airfields where they were parked between civilian houses and even placed immediately adjacent to important archaeological sites and historic treasures;

(c) Coalition aircraft were fired upon by anti-aircraft weapons in residential neighbourhoods in various cities. In Baghdad, anti-aircraft sites were located on hotel roofs;

(d) In one case, military engineering equipment used to traverse rivers, including mobile bridge sections, was located in several villages near an important crossing point. The Iraqis parked each vehicle adjacent to a civilian house.

Total casualties reported as of 1 March for United States forces participating in military actions in accordance with Security Council resolution 678 (1990) are 79 killed in action, 241 wounded in action and at least 44 missing or captured in action.

On 27 February, in an address to the nation, President Bush reported coalition action against Iraq had been successful and thus the coalition would suspend offensive combat operations as of midnight (eastern standard time) on that day.

In conclusion, I would like to quote from that address, in which President Bush said: "no one country can claim this victory as its own. It was not only a victory for Kuwait, but a victory for all the coalition partners. This is a victory for the United Nations, for all mankind, for the rule of law and for what is right."

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Thomas R. PICKERING

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